Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich;

control means for making the air-fuel ratio in said catalytic apparatus rich to release NO_x from said catalyst of said catalytic apparatus to purify the released NO_x by reduction, and making the air-fuel ratio in the particulate filter rich to release NO_x from said catalyst of said particulate filter to purify the released NO_x by reduction so that said catalyst of said particulate filter also releases active-oxygen to oxidize and remove the particulates trapped on said particulate filter without producing luminous flame without further elevating the temperature of the trapped particulates to ignite and burn the trapped particulates; and

bypassing means to make possible the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter downstream said catalytic apparatus.

3. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein during the recovery process of the SO_x

pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means makes the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter.

4. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 2, wherein immediately after the finishing of the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means does not make the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter and thus the exhaust gas passes through said particulate filter.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)